- Know that your envy doesn't harm your *mahsud*, nor does it make him lose any of his favours and merits. You shall ever suffer in grief, pain, and anguish while the *mahsud* is in a state of bliss and joy. In the Hereafter as well your envy will benefit your *mahsud*, especially if it results in backbiting or slandering as your good deeds will be assigned to the *mahsud.*
- Force yourself to be affectionate with the *mahsud*. The aim of your kindness should be to cure yourself of envy. Your inner self will ask you to ill-treat or hurt him, but you must act against these inclinations and be friendly to him. You must respect him and gradually convince your heart to respect him.
- Try to see his virtues yourself and think that these are favours of Allah on him. Force yourself to speak in his praise and make his good qualities known to others. Though your behaviour will be unnatural in the beginning, since your aim is self-rectification, it will gradually become less artificial. *Insha'Allah*, day by day this will become a reality and your heart will follow your tongue to appreciate his virtues and good qualities.
- You should convince yourself and make it understand that your *mahsud* is a creature of God; perhaps it is God's grace that He has selected him for the advantages and blessings he enjoys that you do not (currently) possess.
- If, God forbid, the object of your envy is a scholar endowed with knowledge or piety, you must understand that he is from the chosen ones of God, blessed by great merit. Try to generate love and humbleness towards him.
- At any stage during your treatment, don't think that this moral vice is not curable; this erroneous notion is inspired by Satan and the lower self (*al-nafs al-ammara*), who want to frustrate your efforts of curing yourself. Have hope in God Almighty Who has promised that He will guide those who struggle and help them through His invisible grace and increase their capacities. (Al-Khumayni, *Forty Hadith*, chapter 5 'Hasad')

Conclusion:

Hasad is a disease of the soul that has grave psychological, moral, and social consequences. Fortunately, with faith and, sincere and persistent efforts, it is curable. A faithful person is optimistic, has a hopeful attitude towards God, and is satisfied with the way He has divided His bounties among His creatures.

- Imam Ali (a) said: "**The person who gives up *hasad* is loved by people.**" (Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 77, p. 237, hadith no. 1)

To find out more about authentic Islam, visit:

http://al-islam.org/faq/

...Or do they envy [other] people because of what Allah has given them of His bounty?
(Qur'an, chapter 4, verse 54)

Abu `Abd Allah (al-Imam al-Sadiq) (a) said that the Apostle of God (s) said that God Almighty addressed Musa ibn `Imran (a) as follows:

"O son of `Imran, never be envious of people concerning the favours I have conferred on them by My grace; do not glower at them, and do not succumb to your (envious) self. Indeed, the envious man is indignant at the bestowal of My favour, and contests My apportioning of gifts among My creatures. Whoever is such, he neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him."

[Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 307, *Bab al-Hasad*, hadith no. 6]

Diseases of the Soul...

Envy

(*Hasad*)

Hasad or malicious envy is a psychological state in which a person wishes for the deprivation of a blessing, talent, or merit possessed by another person (the *mahsud*). Islamic ethical teachings shed light on the causes and motives of *hasad* and its harmful spiritual, moral and social effects, and offer practical solutions for combating this spiritual disease.

The Causes and Motives of Hasad

Qualities in others such as certain intellectual, spiritual, and moral merits, or good and pious deeds, or outward factors such as honour, prestige and wealth can cause *hasad*. Also, immoral or negative traits that are imagined to be merits can be a cause of *hasad*. Almost all of the causes of *hasad* are the products of a feeling of inferiority and dejectedness. When a person perceives others to be more perfect than himself, a feeling of inferiority seizes him, which, with the help of external factors and inner propensities, generates the feeling of envy in his heart.

The scholar al-`Allamah al-Majlisi has mentioned seven causes and motives of *hasad*. We have listed these causes and in some cases provided examples of *hasad* corresponding to the cause:

- **Enmity**: *Hasad* can be the result of enmity. For example, enmity against another family, tribe or group can cause one to envy successes they achieve.
- **The sense of one's supremacy**: The *hasid* (one who envies) anticipates the pride of the *mahsud* on account of a merit *mahsud* enjoys. Not having the patience to put up with this pride, the *hasid* feels a sense of superiority and earnestly desires the loss of this merit.
- ***Kibr*** (pride) and **Wonder**: The *hasid* high-handedly treats the person who is conferred some merit, favour, or talent, and may wonder to see a great blessing enjoyed by the object of his envy. For example, a wealthy individual outwardly looks with disdain upon the respect enjoyed by a poor person believing that he *deserves* to be the recipient of such admiration.
- **Fear** and **Love of authority**: Also, the envious man is fearful of some hindrance on the part of the person enjoying an advantage or talent or merit that may frustrate his cherished objectives. Such fear manifests itself when one's acquiring or preserving authority over others requires that nobody should share his advantages or merits. For example, one who wishes to be re-elected as the leader of an organization may desire that no other member step forward and exhibit leadership skills such as eloquence of speech and efficiency of organization and mobilization.
- **Viciousness of nature**: A human being of vicious nature does not like to see others enjoying any kind of good whatsoever. Such a person always greets news of another's good fortune for example, in education or business, with sarcasm, pessimism, and ridicule or with other unethical tactics or conduct.

The Evil effects of Hasad

Envy is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart and it produces additional vices such as hypocrisy, backbiting, slandering, abuse, taunting, and torturing, all of which are grave sins. This hideous condition makes the human heart so narrow and gloomy that its effects pervade the realm of one's inner and outer being. The fears and grief of the *hasid* revolve around the person(s) of whom he is envious. The *hasad* he harbours in his heart blinds him to the virtues of the envied, and he becomes unhappy over the blessings of God conferred upon the *mahsud*. The spiritual light and the divine spark of faith which makes the human heart greater than anything else in the world cannot go along with the darkness and narrowness caused in it by *hasad*. The heart becomes grieved and depressed, the chest narrow and suffocated, and the face grim and frowning. The more this state gains in strength, the more it diminishes the brightness of faith, while this faith is the source of his salvation in the Hereafter and the life and vigour of his heart. Eventually this disease reduces the *hasid* into a helpless wretch.

- The Prophet Muhammad (s) said: "**Beware! Do not bear enmity with the blessings of Allah.**" When asked about the people who bear enmity with the blessings of Allah, he (s) replied: "**Those who are envious.**" (Al-Mu`tazali, *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, vol.1, p. 315)
- Imam Ali (a) said: "**Envy is a great trap of Satan**." (Al-Amadi, *Gharar al-Hakam wa darar al-Kalam*, hadith no. 1133)
- Imam Ali (a) said: "**A *hasid* is a sick person though he (may) physically appear to be healthy.**" (*Gharar*, hadith no. 1963)
- Muhammad ibn Muslim reports that al-Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "A man may be forgiven for something done in a fit of anger, but ***hasad* devours faith as fire consumes wood**." (Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 306, *Bab al-Hasad*, hadith no. 1)
- Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a) is reported to have said: "Satan says to his soldiers: "**Instil *hasad* and disobedience of Allah among them (bani Adam) as these are equal to *shirk* (polytheism) in the eyes of Allah."** (Al-Kulayni, *Usul al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 327, *Bab al-Baghy*, hadith no. 2)
- Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq (a) said that Luqman (a) said to his son: "There are three signs of a *Hasid*: (1) **He is a backbiter at the back** (2) **He is a flatterer in front** and (3) **He is happy when a misfortune befalls (*the envied*)**. (Al-Saduq, *Al-Khisal*, p. 121, hadith no. 113)

The Cure for this Disease

If you suffer from this deadly disease, seriously contemplate the enormity of its devastating effects on your faith. Consider taking following steps to purge it from your heart: